

## A landmark legal victory for Protected Landscapes

In our last Newsletter (October 2024) Ruth Bradshaw from the Campaign for National Parks (CNP) explained an important new legal duty for public bodies in Protected Landscapes (National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty). They must now “seek to further” (not just “have regard to”) the statutory purposes of Protected Landscapes. Just to recap, in a National Park this means they must further the following two purposes:

- to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage
- to promote opportunities for the public understanding and enjoyment **of the special qualities of the Parks** [our emphasis].

We now have proof that this legislation has teeth: Government lawyers admitted defeat in a judicial review brought by the CNP and a local charity, Dedham Vale Society, against the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Angela Rayner. The Government had approved the development of a significant car park extension without observing the new legal duty to “conserve and enhance” National Parks and National Landscapes.

It was one of the first cases to consider this duty, which came about after decades of campaigning by the CNP for change. It sets a critical precedent for all of England’s 10 National Parks and 34 National Landscapes, making clear that all public bodies must comply with the law to further conservation and enhancement of these areas.

What does this mean for all public bodies in the Lake District? As the [Government guidance](#) to the new duty makes clear, they must, for example, consider measures to

**“contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the Protected Landscape’s wildlife, ecological value and quality, geological and physiographical features, water environment, cultural heritage, dark skies, tranquillity, opportunities for access to nature, and landscape character for which the area was designated”.**

It's not difficult to work out that protecting green lanes for nature, for walkers, cyclists, equestrians and residents would do exactly that.